

XIII.—*Letters, Extracts, and Notes.*

WE have received the following letters addressed "To the Editors of 'The Ibis'" :—

SIRS,—In reply to your enquiries, I have pleasure in informing you that I found the two eggs of the Standard-winged Nightjar (*Macrodipteryx longipennis*), which I presented to the British Museum\*, near a small town named Ikere, fourteen miles N.E. of Ibadan, in the Western Province of Southern Nigeria. There were only two eggs in the nest, and I should say that this is the usual number of the clutch, as the hen had just begun to sit. The nest was very primitive, consisting of a few dried grasses, fashioned into a nest on the bare ground, which in this case was on the site of a deserted farm. The hen bird sat very closely, and I almost trod on her, as her plumage very nearly corresponded with the ground. When she flew off, I found that she had not got any pennants to her wings, and from frequent observations I have come to the conclusion that it is only the male bird which has the peculiar flag-like pennants on its wings. These birds are rarely seen in the daytime, unless disturbed from their quiet dark day-resorts, but they are very common after sunset till dark.

Yours &c.,

Jan. 11th, 1908.

J. H. J. FARQUHAR

(Assist. Conservator of Forests,  
Southern Nigeria).

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SIRS,—By the outgoing mail I am sending you a skin of what I believe to be *Glareola pratincola* and a clutch of two eggs. These birds were nesting in hundreds on the ploughed land of the estate of Mr. Alfred Platt, Isipingo, Natal, which is on the south coast, about twelve miles from Durban. The eggs were laid on the bare ground, mostly on hard dark soil, which had been pecked up by the birds into small pellets, and the nests were placed on the ridges between the ploughed furrows. The eggs are so closely similar to the surroundings

\* Cf. 'Ibis,' 1907, p. 655.

that an experienced eye is needed to find them, notwithstanding that they are exposed on the bare ground. The birds tried all manner of antics to entice me away from their eggs. At one time they were observed sprawling with their wings outstretched, then fluttering on the ground with legs extended, or running about close by and feigning lameness. It was most amusing to watch their clever devices to lead me away from their nests. My object in sending the specimen is owing to some doubt existing in my mind as to which Pratincole it is. In Sclater's book (Faun. S. Afr., Birds, vol. iv. p. 333) *Glareola pratincola* is described as an "accidental visitor to South Africa"; he also says that the "iris is blue with eyelids coral-red"; whereas these birds were nesting in hundreds, and, to make sure of identification, I shot six specimens. They all had brown irides and no coral-red eyelids; besides which the females are distinguishable from the males by the black line on the throat being not so clearly defined, while the plumage is duller and the outer tail-feathers less prolonged. All the birds had the under wings-coverts chestnut, as is clearly observable when they fly past, and there were none of the other Pratincoles in the neighbourhood. I saw thirteen nests, all of which contained two eggs each, mostly fresh: this was on the 16th of November last. I shall be glad to know whether the skin sent is that of *G. pratincola*.

Yours &c.,

D. MILLAR.

Durban, Natal,  
Dec. 9th, 1907.

[We have examined the skin sent, which is certainly that of *G. pratincola*, not *G. melanoptera*. It is remarkable that it should breed in Natal, as well as in Southern Europe.—  
EDD.]

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SIRs,—When writing of *Geocichla varia* ('Ibis,' above, p. 132) I should have mentioned that Mr. Heatley Noble exhibited a nest, bird, and eggs of this species at a meeting of the B. O. C. on Feb. 21st, 1900 (Bull. B. O. C. x. p. xlvii). These were obtained in the first place (along with others)

from Mr. Alan Owston, of Yokohama, who had received them from his native collectors. It appears that the above-mentioned bird had been snared on the nest. On May 21st, 1899, Mr. Owston's brother—Mr. Francis Owston—shot a male White's Thrush on a nest containing two young birds and an egg, but the egg was unfortunately broken by the shot. The fragments of this shell, together with the nestlings (preserved in spirits), were sent to Mr. Heatley Noble. One of these young birds Mr. Noble has very generously presented to the Natural History Museum, while the nest referred to in my paper (above, p. 132) was also a gift from that gentleman.

With regard to the bibliography of Japanese birds, I omitted to refer to the several pamphlets or annotated "lists" printed privately by Mr. Alan Owston in Yokohama. Although they contain notes of the briefest description, in consideration of the author's wide experience of Japanese ornithology they are of very great interest, and, moreover, unacknowledged quotations have frequently been made from them.

Yours &c.,

Tetbury, Glos.,  
February 27th, 1908.

COLLINGWOOD INGRAM.

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*The Hobart Museum, Tasmania.*—We are pleased to be able to announce that Mr. Robert Hall, of Melbourne, who, in 1903, made the enterprising ornithological journey to the Lena described in this Journal ('Ibis,' 1904, p. 415), and is well known to us by other writings, has been appointed to succeed the late Mr. Alex. Morton as Curator of the Hobart Museum, Tasmania. Mr. Hall writes to us that he would take up his new post at Hobart on the 1st of January, 1908.

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*The Naardermeer.*—Mr. F. E. Blaauw has kindly sent us a copy of the Report of the newly founded Dutch Society for "the preservation of Nature's Monuments in the Netherlands" (see Bull. B. O. C. xix. p. 38) From it we gather that the acquisition of the Naardermeer has been quite a